

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of prompting comprising the steps of:
 - (a) maintaining a computer database;
 - (b) sensing a person in a first area;
 - (c) determining whether the person has cleansed their hands before leaving the area;
 - (d) if it is determined that the person has cleansed their hands, sending this information to the database;
 - (e) if it is determined that the person has not cleansed their hands before leaving the first area, determining whether the person has entered a second area;
 - (f) if it is determined that the person has entered the second area, determining whether the person has cleansed their hands;
 - (g) if it is determined that the person has not entered the second area, determining whether the person has cleansed their hands in a third area after leaving the first area;
 - (h) if it is determined that the person has cleansed their hands after entering the second or third area, sending the information to the database;
 - (i) if it is determined that the person has not cleansed their hands after entering the second area or the third area, generating a warning; and
 - (j) if it is determined that the person has not cleansed their hands after the warning is generated, sending the information to the database.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

(k) if it is determined that there is no need for the person to cleanse their hands, no warning is generated and sending this information to the database.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of generating generates the warning signal as at least one of an audio signal or a visual signal.

4. A method of handwashing comprising the steps of:

detecting a person in a restroom;

monitoring whether the person flushes a toilet;

if it is determined that the person has not flushed the toilet, sending the information to a central database;

if the person flushes the toilet, determining whether the person cleanses their hands within a predetermined period of time before leaving the restroom and sending this information to the central database;

if it is determined that the person has not cleansed their hands within the predetermined period of time, generating a warning signal and sending this information to the central database; and

if it is determined that the person has not cleansed their hands after the warning signal was generated, sending this information to the central database.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of generating generates the warning signal as at least one of an audio signal or a visual signal.

6. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of determining whether the toilet has been flushed a subsequent time before the person has left the restroom.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of determining whether the person has cleansed their hands an additional time.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of generating a subsequent warning signal if the person has not cleansed their hands an additional time and sending this information to the central database.

9. An apparatus for increasing the frequency of handwashing comprising:

- a central processor;
- a receiver;
- a communication link connecting the central processor and the receiver;
- a first sensor located near the opening of a first area for determining motion through the opening;
- a second sensor located inside the first area for determining movement within the first area;
- a module located inside the first area for emitting audio and visual signals;
- a third sensor located at an opening of a second area located adjacent to the first area for determining entry and exit from the second area;
- a fourth sensor located inside the second area for determining toilet usage;
- a fifth sensor located inside the second area for determining sink usage;
- a sixth sensor located near the opening of the first area for determining cleanser dispenser usage; and

wherein the sensors communicate with the receiver via radio waves or hard wires and the module communicates with the central processor via AC or radio waves.

10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the first sensor is an IR beam breaker switch.

11. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the second sensor is a thermal detector.

12. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the audio signal is generated by a speaker.

13. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the visual signal is generated by an illumination device.

14. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the third sensor and fourth sensor are magnetic contact switches.

15. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the fourth sensor further comprises a conductive material attached to the toilet handle.

16. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the fifth sensor is a sink water flow switch.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the sink water flow switch is comprised of an aerator and at least one electrode.

18. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the sixth sensor is a switch in connection with the cleanser dispenser.

19. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the cleanser is at least one of liquid soap and anti-septic foam.

20. A system for promoting handwashing comprising:
- a computer system for maintaining a computer database;
 - a first sensor for sensing a person in an area;
 - a second sensor for sensing the person's movement to another area;

a determining unit for monitoring the first and second sensor output and for determining whether the person has cleansed their hands and

a generating unit for generating a warning signal based on the determining unit output; and

a transmitting unit for transmitting information to the computer system based on the output of the determining unit and the generating unit.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the generating unit generates the warning signal as at least one of an audio signal or a visual signal.

22. A system for increasing handwashing comprising:

a detecting unit for detecting a person entering a restroom;

a monitoring unit for monitoring whether the person flushes a toilet while in the restroom;

a determining unit for determining whether the person flushes the toilet and cleanses their hands within a predetermined period of time;

a generating unit for generating a warning signal after the predetermined period of time has expired if the person has not cleansed their hands; and

a transmitting unit for transmitting to a central database whether the person has cleansed their hands within the predetermined period of time.

23. The system of claim 22 wherein the generating unit generates the warning signal as at least one of an audio signal or a visual signal.

24. An apparatus for reporting and monitoring comprising:

a means for processing;

a means for receiving;

a communication means connecting the processing means and the receiving means;

a first sensing means located near the opening of a first area for determining entry and exit from the first area;

a second sensing means located inside the first area for determining movement within the first area;

an audio and visual emitting means;

a third sensing means located at an opening of a second area located adjacent to the first area for determining entry and exit from the second area;

a fourth sensing means located inside the second area for determining toilet usage;

a fifth sensing means located inside the second area for determining sink usage;

a sixth sensing means located near the opening of the first area for determining cleanser dispenser usage; and

wherein the sensing means communicate with the receiving means via radio waves and the audio and visual emitting means communicates with the processing means via AC.

25. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the first sensor is an IR beam breaker switch.

26. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the second sensor is a thermal detector.

27. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the audio signal is generated by a speaker.

28. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the visual signal is generated by an illumination device.

29. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the third sensor and fourth sensor are magnetic contact switches.

30. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the fourth sensor further comprises a conductive material attached to the toilet handle.

31. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the fifth sensor is a sink water flow switch.

32. The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the sink water flow switch is comprised of an aerator and at least one electrode.

33. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the sixth sensor is a cleanser dispenser unit.

34. The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the cleanser is selected from the group consisting of liquid soap and anti-septic foam.

35. An apparatus for increasing the frequency of handwashing comprising:

- a central processor;
- a receiver;
- a communication link connecting the central processor and the receiver;
- a first sensor located near the opening of a first area;
- a second sensor located inside the first area;
- a communication module located inside the first area;
- a third sensor located at an opening of a second area;
- a fourth sensor located inside the second area;
- a fifth sensor located inside the second area;

a sixth sensor located near the opening of the first area; and
wherein the sensors communicate with the receiver via radio waves or hard wires and the module communicates with the central processor via AC in order to indicate whether handwashing has occurred.

36. A system for promoting handwashing comprising:
maintaining means for maintaining a computer database;
first sensing means for sensing a person entering an area;
second sensing means for determining the person's movement to another area;
determining means for monitoring the first and second sensing means and for determining whether the person has cleansed their hands within a predetermined period of time before entering the room;
generating means for generating a warning signal at an expiration of the predetermined time period; and
transmitting means for sending whether the person cleansed their hands to the database.

37. The system of claim 36 wherein the generating means generates the warning signal as at least one of an audio signal or a visual signal.

38. A system for increasing hygienic behavior comprising:
detecting means for detecting a person entering a restroom;
monitoring means for monitoring whether the person flushes a toilet while in the restroom;
determining means for determining whether after the person flushes the toilet the person cleanses their hands within a predetermined period of time;

generating means for generating a warning signal after the predetermined period of time has expired if the person has not cleansed their hands; and

sending means for sending the information to a central database if it is determined that the person has not cleansed their hands within the predetermined period of time.

39. The system claim 38 wherein the generating means generates the warning signal as at least one of an audio signal or a visual signal.